



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/652,115	08/30/2003	James J. O'Connor	0020-3 CIP	1836

25901 7590 07/18/2006

ERNEST D. BUFF
ERNEST D. BUFF AND ASSOCIATES, LLC.
231 SOMERVILLE ROAD
BEDMINSTER, NJ 07921

EXAMINER

JAGAN, MIRELLYS

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2859	

DATE MAILED: 07/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S.

Patent 5,072,523 to Bennett in view of U.S. Patent 5,222,303 to Jardine, U.S. Patent 5,598,638 to Plesh, and U.S. Patent 5,361,509 to Wheeler, Sr. et al [hereinafter Wheeler].

Bennett discloses an apparatus comprising:

a substantially flat elongated body (16) with first and second ends, front and back sides, and a longitudinal axis;

a first horizontal slot, e.g., at 32 in figure 2, disposed on the body at a first location and arranged perpendicularly to the axis for determining placement of an outlet box in accordance with a selected standard or code;

a second horizontal slot disposed on the body at a second location and arranged perpendicularly to the axis for determining placement of an outlet box in accordance with a selected standard or code; and

a third horizontal slot disposed on the body at a third location and arranged perpendicularly to the axis for determining placement of standard wall switches in accordance with a selected standard or code (see figure 6).

Bennett teaches that the slots are located at different locations along the body so that electrical boxes and switches can be placed at proper locations, i.e., standard locations.

Bennett does not disclose the apparatus having length of about 6 feet; a width of 2-4 inches; a set of indicia located along each edge of the front side of the body for indicating the distance of the slots from the first end; a level for vertically leveling the apparatus; and the second slot being for determining placement of a counter-high outlet box.

Jardine discloses a measuring apparatus for locating the position of an electrical box. The apparatus has a level (26) thereon for properly positioning the apparatus vertically to allow accurate positioning of the box, and indicia along an edge of the front side of the body for indicating distance from a first end.

Plesh discloses an apparatus for marking the location of electrical boxes on a wall. The apparatus has an elongated body for determining placement of a box above a floor in accordance with desired standards such that a single box may be located at different heights that are unrelated to each other. The length of the body is between 4 to about 6 feet and the width of a first end of the body is 2-4 inches in order to place a box vertically along the length of a wall or stud (see figure 1; and column 4, lines 55-60).

Wheeler discloses that it is known to provide an outlet box at a counter-high level (see column 6, lines 41-44).

Art Unit: 2859

Referring to claim 1, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus disclosed by Bennett by adding a level to the apparatus and indicia along a front edge of the body, as taught by Jardine, in order to properly position the apparatus vertically when positioning an electrical box, and in order to visually determine the height of a particular slot to position a box in a desired and proper location from the floor.

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Bennett by making the body having a length of about 6 feet and a width of a first end of 2-4 inches, as taught by Plesh, in order to place a box vertically along the length of a wall or stud.

Also, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Bennett by locating the second slot to determine placement of a counter-high outlet box since Wheeler teaches that it is known in the art to provide an outlet box at a counter-high level.

Lastly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Bennett, Jardine, Plesh, and Wheeler by providing indicia on both edges of the body in order to determine the distance of all of the slots from the floor, and since it has been held that the mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. See *St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co.*, 193 USPQ 8.

3. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bennett, Jardine, Plesh, and Wheeler, as applied to claims 1 and 5 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent 2,713,203 to Gottlieb.

Bennett, Jardine, Plesh, and Wheeler disclose an apparatus having all of the limitations of claim 2, as stated above in paragraph 2, except for the apparatus having a textual portion of a code or standard.

Gottlieb discloses a measuring apparatus for marking and locating the position a line conforming to building laws and other requirements [i.e., codes and standards] for marking a straight line. The apparatus may have text for indicating instructions and guidelines to allow an inexperienced individual using the apparatus to conform to building laws and other requirements [i.e., codes and standards](see column 3, line 68-column 4, line 10).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus disclosed by Bennett, Jardine, Plesh, and Wheeler by adding a textual portion of the standard or codes on the apparatus since Gottlieb teaches that providing a text of building laws or other requirements is beneficial since it allows an inexperienced individual using the apparatus to conform to building laws and other requirements.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 2, and 5 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mirellys Jagan whose telephone number is 571-272-2247. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 11AM to 4PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Diego Gutierrez can be reached on 571-272-2245. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 2859

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

MJ
July 6, 2006



Diego Gutierrez
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 2800